

About Your Negative HIV Antibody Test

What do the test results mean?

The HIV test shows if you have HIV antibodies in your blood. HIV is the virus that can cause AIDS.

A negative test means no HIV antibodies have been found in your blood at the time of your test. It can mean:

- 1) you are not infected with the HIV virus, or
- 2) you are infected, but your body hasn't made enough antibodies yet.

The HIV test is an extremely accurate test.

Since I tested "negative," am I free from HIV now?

YES....If you were tested 6 months after the last time you had unsafe sex or shared needles or "works".

MAYBE....If your last unsafe act was 3 months ago or more at the time you were tested, then you are probably free from HIV. For most people, the test can find an infection if the blood sample is taken 3 months after a person got the virus.

BUT....If less than 3 months have passed since your last unsafe experience and the time of your test, the test may not find the virus, even though you are infected.

If you had an unsafe experience after the blood sample was taken, you need another test.

Do I need another test?

Answer these questions to see if you should get tested again:

In the 3 - 6 months before your test, or any time after your test, did you.....

- ▶▶Have unprotected sex with a person who may have HIV?
- ▶▶Share drug needles or "works"?
- ▶▶Fail to use condoms correctly for every sex act?
- ▶▶Have an occupational (work-related) exposure to HIV?

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, there's a chance you could have HIV. You should get tested again 3 to 6 months after your last unsafe experience.

How can I get HIV?

HIV is found in blood, semen ("cum") and vaginal fluids. The virus can be passed to others through any of these body fluids. For HIV to pass from one person to another, the body fluids of an infected person must get inside the body of another person. The HIV virus can enter through the vagina, penis, anus, mouth, or a cut anywhere on the body.

The more times you are exposed to HIV, the greater your chance to get the infection. **IF you don't have HIV, you can stay that way by protecting yourself now.**

Don't let concerns about hiv prevent you from protecting yourself!

What can I do to keep safe from HIV?

Not having sex and not shooting drugs are the surest ways to prevent getting HIV. There are also other ways to reduce your risk of getting HIV.

Protect Yourself If You Have Sex:

- ▶Use a new condom every time you have oral, anal or vaginal sex. Latex or polyurethane is best because HIV can pass through lambskin or natural condoms.
- ▶Use water-based lubricants, like KY jelly. DO NOT use oils or lotions, like Vaseline or Crisco that can cause a condom to break.

Protect Yourself If You Use Drugs or Alcohol:

- ▶Never share needles or syringes to shoot drugs, steroids, or vitamins, or for tattooing, piercing or any other reason.
- ▶Clean needles and syringes with bleach, leave it sit for 30 seconds, repeat 3 times, then rinse with water 3 times after each use.

Mixing sex, drugs, and alcohol is risky. If you are drunk or high it is harder to make good decisions about having sex.

What about other sexually transmitted infections?

Most sexually transmitted infections can cause open sores or rashes in or around the vagina, penis, mouth or anus. These tiny breaks and inflammation in the skin may make it easier for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections to get into the body.

Since many sexually transmitted infections can be cured, quick treatment will protect your health. Call your health care provider for more information.

Where Can I Get More Information?

If you need more information call:

Montana HIV/AIDS Hotline 1-800-233-6668 (call anytime)
National AIDS Hotline 1-800-342-AIDS (call anytime)

You don't have to give your name when you get a test at these places in Montana:

(Additional section):

How to use a condom

Step 1

Open the package. Be careful not to tear the condom. Put the condom on at the start of sex.

Step 2

Place condom on penis and hold the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air. Roll it down the hard penis to the pubic hair. Make sure the condom does not ride up during sex.

If there is no tip, leave a half-inch space at the tip for semen. Pinch it to squeeze out the air.

Step 3

If the condom is not lubricated (wet), you can put on some spermicide or KY jelly. Do NOT use oil or vaseline. These can weaken condoms, causing them to break.

If you feel a condom break during sex, stop, pull out and put on a new condom.

Step 4

After you ejaculate (cum), while the penis is still hard, hold the condom firmly at the base, close to the pubic hair. Pull out slowly. Remove the condom by rolling it off.

Step 5

Tie the condom in a knot and throw it away. Do not flush it down the toilet.

Remember: Use a **new** condom every time you have sex - anal, oral or vaginal.